

EAP Matters

Why Do Abuse Victims Stay?



Some startling statistics:

On average, **24 people per minute** are victims of rape, physical violence or stalking by an intimate partner in the United States – more than **12 million women and men** over the course of a year.

1 in 4 women and 1 in 7 men, aged 18 or older in the United States, have been the victim of severe physical violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime.

For those whose lives have not been touched by domestic violence, it can be difficult to understand why someone would stay. We often put ourselves in the place of the victims and imagine ourselves leaving at the first signs of abuse. But breaking free of abuse is not simply a matter of walking out the door. **Leaving is a process.**

The reasons for staying vary from one situation to the next, and they usually involve several factors.

Here are some of the more common reasons:

Emotional reasons for staying

- Belief that the abusive partner will change because of his or her remorse and promises to stop battering
- Fear of the abuser who threatens to kill the victim if abuse is reported to anyone
- Lack of emotional support
- Guilt over the failure of the relationship
- Attachment to the partner
- Fear of making major life changes
- Feeling responsible for the abuse
- Feeling helpless, hopeless and trapped
- Belief that she or he is the only one who can help the abuser change

Situational reasons for staying

- Economic dependence on the abuser
- Fear of physical harm to self, children or family pets (Statistics show that 75% of victims who are murdered by their abuser are killed when they leave, or after they leave, the relationship.)
- Fear of emotional damage to the children over the loss of a parent, even if that parent is abusive
- Fear of losing custody of the children because the abuser threatens to take the children if victim tries to leave
- Lack of job skills
- Social isolation
- Lack of information regarding domestic violence resources
- Victim believes that law enforcement won't take them seriously
- Lack of alternative housing
- Cultural or religious constraints

If you would like to speak with an EAP counselor regarding this issue, please contact us at 402-398-5566 or 1-888-847-4975. Our phones are answered 24 hours a day.



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